tic beings: God, lesser divinities, the ancestors, and nature spirits and forces. But Tylor's perspective is also very evident in the endorsement of religious evolutionism, or refinement, which Parrinder proposes. West African religion, which is neither “primitive” nor “fetichist” — two lower levels by Tylor — but “traditional,” like ancient Near Eastern traditional religions, is destined to be purified and replaced by Christianity and Islam. This line is carried over in the revisions, as Parrinder states that it is only in the new religions that African spirituality can and should play its part: in the dialogue between Islam and Christianity, and the creation of new insights for the African setting (p. 195).

The trouble with such a revision twenty years after the book became a classic in the field is that its original perspective — a human Tylorian evolutionism suited to religious imperialism — is subjected to the contradictions of change, yet not adequately revised. To make things worse, with hindsight Parrinder can and does criticize both Tylor and the enforced imposition of outside religion, but his basic argument which is in some sense rooted in both views is not revised. It would have been advisable, in this reviewer's opinion, to leave intact as a timepiece the original work and to identify changing perspectives in an explanatory preface.

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Ever since Henry Morton Stanley plunged into Africa in search of Dr. Livingstone the continent has provided the journalist with rich materials and not infrequently rich rewards. As is their custom journalists in Africa have generally concerned themselves with contemporary events, people, and animals, in that order, but recently the insatiable interest in the African past has proven irresistible. Russell Warren Howe, the African correspondent for the Washington Post from 1957 to 1965, is not the first to succumb to this temptation. One would wish, however, that he would be the last. His two volume history of Black Africa is “intended as a historical introduction to Black Africa, a background to the news despatches”. Unhappily, the quality of Mr. Howe's work follows more in the tradition of Henry Morton Stanley than Basil Davidson or even Alan Moorehead and despite a century of historical scholarship nineteenth century judgments about Stanley's writings can perhaps be applied, not unfairly, to Mr. Howe. Florence Nightingale described Stanley's How I Found Livingstone as “the worst possible book about the best possible subject”, and this reviewer must lamentably come to the same conclusion about Black Africa. Neither in content nor interpretation is this work something of value. Old myths are perpetuated; new ones are created. In volume II Mr. Howe is able to turn his experience in West Africa to good account, and the chapters on decolonization take on an aura of reliability which is useful but not particularly illuminating. Perhaps, one might overlook grievous sins of omission and commission if they were submerged by quality of style, freshness of langu-
age, and rhetorical enthusiasm. Unfortunately, the writing is pedestrian at best, laced with colloquialism which exude inaccuracy and jargon which drugs interest. These are dull volumes.

Mr. Howe begins with a curious “Author’s Note” in which his hostility to scholarship is ill-disguised. In his efforts to avoid “the shackles of ethnic prejudice” he seems to dismiss much of the historical scholarship of the African past by understanding the bias therein but not the contributions. The subsequent chapters betray the author’s frequent failures to obtain the facts or to assess critically those he has found. Inaccuracies are scattered throughout every chapter, compromising the more sensible assertions and undermining informed readers confidence. A few examples will suffice. His description of the peoples of Africa (vol. I, p. 10) follows Seligman’s racial classification which has long fallen into disrepute if not outright disuse. The author seems totally unaware of the work of Joseph Greenberg, Malcolm Guthrie or even the widely disseminated culture history of George P. Murdock. Chapter 2 (vol. I) is no improvement. Punt is not the coast of the Sudan (p. 14); Engaruka is not a vast ruined town (p. 15); and Mapungunbwe was not a part of the Kingdom of the Monomotapa (p. 18). More surprising in a work in which the author swears not “to read more into existing knowledge than is there.” (vol. I, p. x) Mr. Howe cannot resist speculation, and at times wildly. Thus, the ethnic beginnings of the Garamantes are pure fantasy (p. 29) as are the Jewish origins of the Fulani (p. 32).

In fact, the author is forever classifying people as Caucasian or Negro, such as the Almoravides (p. 45), when they are probably neither. Nor are these misrepresentations confined to the opening chapters. Emin Pasha was anything but “a high class swashbuckler” (p. 237). Samuel Baker never really “penetrated Ethiopia” (p. 259), hunting in fact only along the frontier. On p. 265, 1886 should read 1866. Such errors might be dismissed as petty mistakes but when they occur with such devastating frequency the total veracity of the author’s work remains hopelessly in doubt.

Fortunately, volume II has less brute errors, but the failure to analyze or even to recognize the existence of interpretations is an even more serious criticism than the numerous factual mistakes of the first volume. To be sure there are indications in volume I of what the reader may expect in volume II. In Chapter 9, Part 2, there are six pages (pp. 214–220) on the precolonial history of East Africa and eleven pages on the explorations of Stanley. In fact the history of East Africa, in glaring comparison to the treatment of the history of the West African coast, is reduced to little more than the adventures of a few European explorers – a tortuous discourse of little value to either the beginning student or the scholar of Africa. Thus, one should not be surprised to find volume II, Black Africa from the Colonial Era to Modern Times, a series of vignettes of the various African territories written in the pattern made famous by John Gunther and comprised of massive details with little interpretation. One would have thought that “the diplomat, the correspondent, the international businessman ... and the broad nonfiction reader” (vol. I, p. xi) to which these volumes are addressed would soon become lost in the forest of facts, correct or not, without the guideposts of meaningful analysis.

Although one can hardly impugn the intentions of the author, the reader can legitimately question his selected bibliography which, even if selective, displays only the most superficial and antiquated reading in African history. One